

The **S**trange World of Roger and Other Amazing Tales



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All stories by Johnny, illustrated by Lily

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Roger and the Tiger

Roger loved tigers. His room was full of toy tigers, his walls were covered with pictures of tigers, he had a tiger bedspread, tiger pajamas, a tiger bag and a shelf full of tiger videos. But what Roger wanted most of all was a real live tiger.

As his birthday drew near he asked Mom and Dad for a tiger every single day. They just smiled.

On the day of Roger's birthday he went downstairs excitedly looking for his presents. There was a nice hat from Nanny and Grandad, and a pair of stripy socks from Uncle Joe. But Roger started to cry. Where was Mom and Dad's present?



Dad laughed.

"Don't cry, Roger." he said. "Follow me."

Dad led Roger out to the garage and opened the door. There in the corner was a big box.

"Open it." said Dad.

Roger opened the box. Inside was a great big orange and black tiger. Roger put his arms around the tiger and hugged his soft, warm fur. The tiger licked Roger's face.

"Thanks Dad, he's great. I'll call him Peter." said Roger, hugging the tiger even tighter.

That afternoon Roger and Dad went to the pet shop, where they bought a strong leather leash and a giant collar so Roger could take the tiger for walks.

Next day Roger gave the tiger his breakfast and put his leash on.

"Come on," said Roger, "I'll take you to the park to meet my friends. They'll be so amazed when they see you."

Roger and the tiger arrived at the park. Roger's friends were playing on the swings and slide. Roger called out to them. But instead of being amazed they were absolutely terrified at seeing the huge tiger and ran away crying as quickly as they could.

Roger was a little surprised, but he just stroked the tiger's ears and said, "Don't worry about them Peter, they're just kids. We don't need them anyway."

Next day Roger took his tiger to school. He knew everyone would love his new pal. His teacher often told them stories of tigers in the jungle, and once they watched a DVD about a tiger. But when Roger opened the classroom door and everyone saw the tiger they all screamed and jumped out the window. Even the teacher who had told them all those tiger stories.

Roger was starting to feel a little sad. Why didn't anyone want to meet his new friend. Sure, the tiger had big teeth, but he wouldn't hurt anyone. Roger tickled the tiger's tummy. The tiger purred contentedly.

Then Roger had a wonderful idea. He'd take the tiger to see Nanny and Grandad. Whenever he felt sad he always went to visit them and they always managed to cheer him up. And Roger remembered that Nanny and Grandad loved animals; they always put their stale bread out for the birds.

He reached their house and knocked on the door. Nanny opened it. But instead of being pleased to see them she screamed and ran back inside the house. Roger went inside, but could only catch a glimpse of her vaulting over the garden fence.

Grandad was asleep in his armchair. He woke up when he heard Nanny's screams. When he saw the tiger he jumped out of his chair making a big hole in the ceiling.

Now Roger really didn't know what to do. He went back home. Dad was watching television.

"Dad." said Roger.

"Yes." said Dad.

"I know I really wanted a tiger," said Roger, "and I really do love Peter very much. But everyone's scared of him. All my friends ran away, I couldn't take him to school, and even Nanny and Grandad didn't want to meet him."

Dad thought for a moment and then picked up the telephone. A few minutes later a man arrived in a big truck.

"He's going to take the tiger back to India." said Dad, "He'll be much happier there, and I think you'll be much happier too. Perhaps having a tiger wasn't such a good idea after all."

Next day Dad took back to the pet shop and they chose a cute little puppy.

"I'll call him Paul." said Roger.

Roger took Paul to the park to meet his friends. This time everyone came over and stroked the little dog. Then Roger took his new pal to school. Again everyone loved him.

That afternoon Roger took Paul to meet Nanny and Grandad. Grandad was standing on a ladder mending the hole in the ceiling. He climbed down and stroked Peter's ears, and Nanny opened a can of dog food for him.

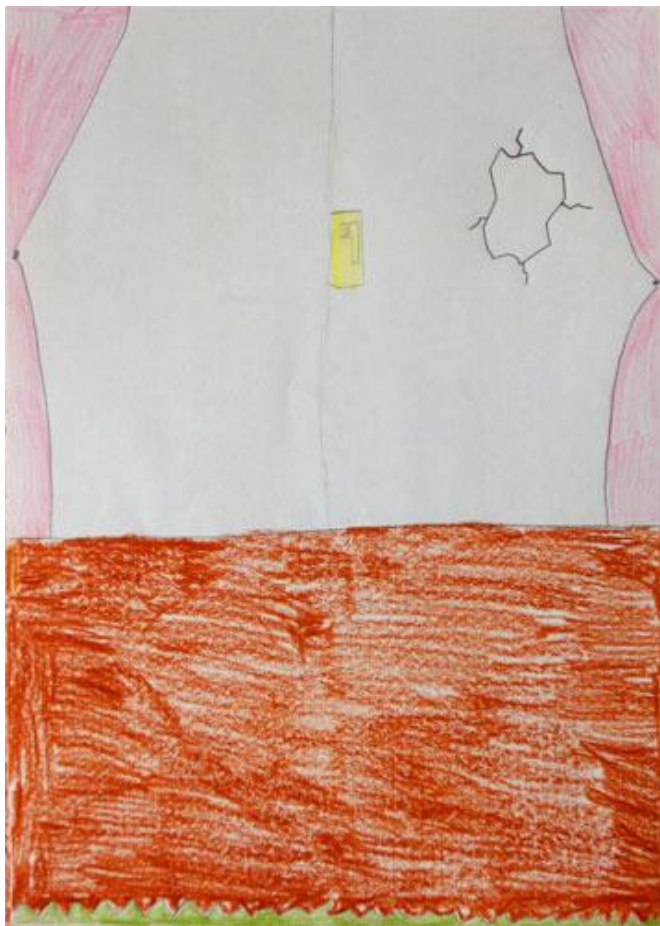
And every summer Roger and his family went to visit Peter the tiger living happily in the jungle.

John Smith's Long Curly Bright Red Hair

Once upon a time there was a little boy called John Smith.

John Smith was a very popular boy, very clever and good at sports. He always had lots of friends. Everyone loved his witty personality, his lively sense of humor and his colorful clothes. But most of all people loved his long, curly, bright, red hair.

John's best friend was Tommy. One day John was playing at Tommy's house. The two boys were practicing soccer in the garden when John took a great big powerful kick at the ball. He kicked it so hard the ball went flying through Tommy's Mom's kitchen window.



Tommy's Mom flew out demanding to know who had kicked the ball. Quick as a flash John told her that Tommy had kicked it. As much as Tommy tried to tell her it was John she didn't believe him. Tommy was locked in his room for a month and his pocket money stopped until the window had been paid for.

From that day on Tommy and John Smith were no longer friends. Everyone

else continued to love John, and no one believed Tommy when he tried to tell them what John had done.

After leaving school John Smith quickly found a good job and began earning lots of money. Somebody told him that Tommy had moved to Australia.

As a man John continued to be very popular. He loved parties, and had lots of friends. They loved his lively personality, his witty sense of humor and his colorful clothes. But most of all they loved his long, curly, bright, red hair.

One Saturday night, or more accurately early Sunday morning, John Smith went to bed after an especially noisy party at his house. As usual he quickly fell asleep, but this particular night he was woken by a bright flash in his room. He was astonished to see his old friend Tommy, still looking like a little boy, standing by the side of his bed.

"You told a lie and caused me lots of suffering," said Tommy. "Now it's your turn to suffer. By midnight next Saturday I'm going to cut off all your long, curly, bright, red hair. And it'll never grow back again. Never, never, ever."

Tommy laughed as he vanished into thin air. John was terrified. He was shaking and sweating. He tried to go back to sleep but he couldn't.

Next day, as usual, John's friends called on him. They were surprised to find he wasn't his usual lively, joking self.

At first John didn't tell anyone what was wrong, just saying he felt a bit tired. But eventually he told them about Tommy.

"Silly old John, scared of a bad dream." they laughed.

But then they saw John was really scared. They all agreed to come over to John's house on Saturday night and to stay with him until midnight.

The week passed quickly and soon it was Saturday. John's friends came over, but they didn't have a party. Everyone just sat quietly drinking tea and watching the clocks. Eventually midnight came. Exhausted, but relieved to still have his long, curly, bright, red hair, John said goodnight to everyone and went to bed.

As his friends left the house they talked about how they had moved all John's clocks forward an hour to stop him worrying. How they would all laugh about it tomorrow.

Next morning John was woken by the sun streaming through his bedroom window. He smiled at how he had been so scared.

Then he put his hands up to his head. He was as bald as an egg. He let out a scream. Then he looked down. There on the bedroom floor was all his beautiful long, curly, bright, red hair. Every last bit of it.

And it never grew back again.

Roger and the Castle

One Saturday morning Roger woke up, got dressed and went downstairs only to find Mom and Dad already eating breakfast.

"Hi Roger!" said Dad, "We've got a big surprise for you today."

"What is it?" asked Roger excitedly. "We're going to the seaside." said Mom.

Roger was delighted. He loved the smells, the sounds, making sandcastles on the beach, donkey rides, eating hot dogs and paddling in the clear, warm water. He loved everything about the seaside.

But Dad continued, "We don't have to come home tonight. We're going to stay in the big, old castle on the hill." he said.

"Yippee!" cried Roger. This was going to be the best trip ever.

Roger had often looked up at the castle on his trips to the seaside. He imagined what it was like inside, with kings, princesses and jesters, and huge feasts. But now he would finally get the chance to see for himself.

They all got into the car and set off for the seaside. It was a lovely sunny day and just about lunch time when they arrived. They sat down on the beach to enjoy the picnic Mom had brought.

After that Roger spent the afternoon paddling in the sea, building sand castles, going on a donkey ride and eating ice

cream. Roger and Mom and Dad took turns at burying each other in the sand.

Just as the big clock tower chimed six o'clock Dad said to Roger, "Come on, now for the second part of your surprise." They all got into the car and drove to the big old castle. Roger felt so excited that not only would he get to see inside he would also spend the night there.

Dad parked the car and they knocked at the huge wooden door. It was opened by an old man in a smart suit who introduced himself as Charles.

Charles gave them the keys to their rooms and showed them into a giant hall where he introduced them to two other families who would be spending the night. He served everyone with drinks and took their orders for dinner. Roger ordered fish and chips.

Despite the ancient stone walls the hall was very comfortable and had a massive TV for watching movies and playing video games. Roger played with the other children while Mom and Dad talked with the adults.

When dinner arrived it was delicious, the best fish and chips Roger had ever tasted.

After dinner they went back into the giant hall where they played and chatted and relaxed until everyone started yawning.

"Who's for bed?", said Dad.

"Me." said Roger and Mom together.

They all went upstairs and found their rooms. Roger's room was just across from Mom and Dad's.

Mom tucked Roger into bed and kissed him goodnight. "See you in the morning." she said as she switched off his light.



Roger was very tired but try as he might he couldn't sleep. He turned from one side to the other and back again. Then, all of a sudden, he heard a noise. Knock, knock, knock... went the noise. Roger sat up with a start. The he heard a gruff voice, "This is my room, this is my room."

Roger was so scared he ran across to Mom and Dad's room. "Mom, Dad," he cried, "there's a ghost in my room, I just heard it."

"Don't be silly." said Mom, "There are all kinds of noises in an old castle like this, and you've had such a busy day. It's just your mind playing tricks.". Mom took Roger back to bed and tucked him in again.

Again Roger tried to sleep, but still he couldn't. Then he heard the knocking noise again. Knock, knock, knock... it went, and again the gruff voice, only this time it sounded louder and angrier. All of a sudden Roger felt his blanket being pulled from the bed.

"Mom. Dad." yelled Roger as he burst into their room, "There IS a ghost. It jut pulled the blanket from my bed."

This time Dad tried to reassure him. "Don't be silly, son," he said, "it was just a dream. We won't let you watch any more scary movies on television."

Dad took Roger back to his room and this time they looked together for the ghost. They looked in the wardrobe, behind the curtains and under the bed.

"See, no ghosts." said Dad as he switched off the light, "Sleep well, breakfast is at eight tomorrow morning."

Roger tried to sleep again, but try as he might he just couldn't drop off. And then the noise came again, but this time it was really loud. Knock, knock, knock..... "This is my room. This is my room. Get out. I'm tired and I want to sleep." said the voice. When Roger opened his eyes there was an old man dressed in old ragged clothes sitting on the edge of his bed. Roger ran to Mom and Dad's room screaming.

By this time Dad was fast asleep, so Mom took Roger by the hand and led him back to his room. When she opened the door she screamed too. For there in the bed was the great big ugly ghost. He was fast asleep and making the most fearsome snoring noise.

Mom and Roger both ran back and woke Dad. They all grabbed their things and ran out of the castle back to their car to look for a hotel where they could spend the night in peace.

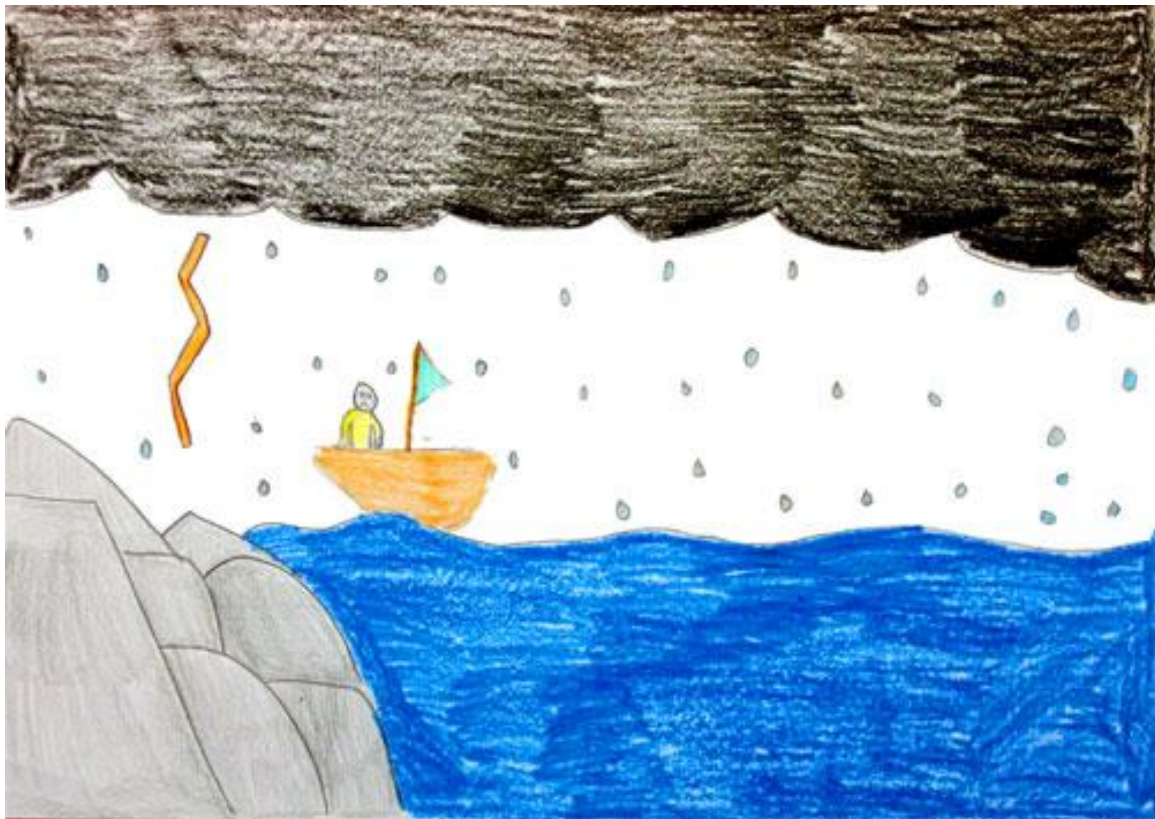
And after that Roger never again wanted to spend the night in a big old castle.

The Fisherman

Once upon a time there was a fisherman. He wasn't a bad man, but he wasn't an especially good man either. He just kept himself to himself. Whenever his neighbors had trouble the fisherman pretended not to notice.

One day the fisherman was out at sea, fishing in his boat, when a sudden and violent storm blew up.

The wind was blowing the fisherman's boat ever closer to some jagged rocks. He knew that if his boat hit the rocks it would be broken in pieces and he would be drowned. He was very scared.



The fisherman had never prayed, but in desperation he cried out: "God, if you save me I'll do anything you ask!"

Just as suddenly as it had arrived so the storm quietened down. The fisherman brought the boat back under his control and guided it safely back to shore.

Back home and still shaking he went straight to the kitchen to make himself a strong cup of tea.

Just then came a blinding flash of white light and a deep voice spoke: "I helped you today, now I want you to spend the rest of your life helping others."

So relieved to be alive the fisherman began to do exactly as he'd been asked. Wherever anyone needed help he offered a hand. He helped ladies carrying heavy shopping bags, men to push their broken-down cars, and children to fix their bikes.

One day as he was hurrying home to watch his favorite TV show he noticed an old lady waiting to cross the road. He knew that he ought to stop and help her, but really didn't want to miss the start of the show so he pretended not to notice and hurried along.

Just as he was settling in front of the TV with a glass of beer there was another flash of blinding white light.

The deep voice spoke again: "You promised you would help others, but today you broke that promise. Every time you look in a mirror from now on you will not see yourself, but instead you shall see a skeleton covered with rotting flesh. Only by becoming human on the inside will you ever again see yourself as human on the outside."

Trembling, the fisherman went into the bathroom and took a peek at the mirror. The voice was right. He looked hideous.

Next day, carefully keeping his eyes covered, the fisherman removed every mirror from his house. But still he saw his grotesque image everywhere he went, reflected in every shop window, shiny surface and puddle.

Once again he started being helpful to other people, but this time he was determined never to stop being helpful for any reason.

Gradually, the fisherman's reflection began to return to normal.

And what's more, after a while he actually began to enjoy helping other people.

Roger and the Shadow

One day Roger and his family moved house to be near Dad's new job.

Roger loved their new house, it had a huge garden, a gigantic playroom, but best of all it was only a short walk from Nanny and Grandad's house, so Roger could visit as often as he liked.

The only problem was that Roger had to start a new school, which made him feel a little nervous.

Roger's first day at his new school was awful. None of the other kids spoke to him and to make matters worse the teacher gave the class some difficult sums for homework. Roger didn't even know how to begin them.

At the end of day bell Roger went straight to Nanny's house. He felt safe with Nanny. She always had time to listen to him, even when Mom and Dad were busy with work and other things.

Nanny opened the door. As usual she was delighted to see Roger.

"Roger, how was your first day at school", she asked.

Roger didn't answer but Nanny could see he felt sad.

"Come in and have some squash and cookies", she said.

Roger and Nanny went into the kitchen and he took a long drink. Then he told Nanny about how he hadn't made any friends and that he couldn't do the sums teacher had given him.

"Don't worry", said Nanny reassuringly. "It's very hard to make friends on your first day. Maybe you'll make friends tomorrow, or in a few days. Take your time and everything will be alright."

Roger felt a little happier; Nanny could always cheer him up. But he reminded her about the sums.

"Don't worry", said Nanny. "Just tell teacher you can't do them and she'll show you again."

"OK", said Roger. He didn't feel quite so sad but Nanny could tell he still wasn't his usual self.

"Here, I've got a special present for you", said Nanny opening a drawer in her favorite cabinet. She took out a golden medal and gave it to Roger.

"My grandad gave this to me when I was a little girl", she told him. "He won it for playing football. He told me to look at it and hold it whenever I felt sad and it would cheer me up. It always worked for me and now it will help you too."

Roger thanked her and put the medal in his jacket pocket. Then



he left and made his way back home.

Just as he arrived at the front door he put his hand in his pocket. The medal was gone. Roger was horrified. Nanny had kept it since she was a little girl and he had lost it in a few minutes. He walked all the way back to Nanny's house, looking at every inch of the sidewalk. But the medal wasn't there. Then he made his way back home again. But still he couldn't find the medal.

"You're late." said Mom.

"How was your first day at school?" asked Dad.

Roger just said it wasn't too bad and told them he'd called in to see Nanny on the way home. They could tell he didn't feel much like talking.

After tea he had his bath and climbed into bed. He took another look at the sums. He didn't even know how to begin them. He closed his schoolbook and opened the book of ghost stories Nanny had given him for his birthday.

All of a sudden out of the corner of his eye Roger noticed a shadow moving on his bedroom wall. He turned to look at it but there was nothing to see. He carried on reading, but soon caught a glimpse of the shadow again. He turned round quickly, but again there was nothing. He felt a little scared but tried to concentrate on a story about a boy and an old house.

Again he thought he saw a shadow. This time when he looked round he was shocked to see the figure of a boy about his own age standing next to his bed. Roger was just about to scream for Mom and Dad when the boy spoke.

"Don't be scared." he said, "what's your name?"

"Roger." said Roger, "what's yours?"

"My name's Norman." said the boy. "Why do you look so sad?"

The boy sounded kind so Roger told him all about his bad day at school.

"There's nothing to be sad about," said Norman, "you haven't really lost Nanny's medal. Why don't you look again in your jacket pocket. You'll find there's a hole in the pocket and if you put your finger through the hole you'll find the medal."

Roger climbed out of bed and went over to his jacket. He put his hand in the pocket where he'd put the medal and sure enough there was a hole in the lining. He poked his finger through and there was the medal. Roger felt so relieved and put it on his desk.

"Thanks." said Roger to Norman.

"Now," said Norman, "I'm pretty good at math. Let's have a look at these sums, shall we?"

Roger reluctantly opened his schoolbook and watched in amazement as Norman whizzed through the first sum, explaining to Roger how he was solving it. Roger hoped Norman would finish them all, but he didn't. Instead he asked Roger to try the next one while he explained how to do it. Roger found that with Norman's help he could do it. Then he finished the next one and the next one until all the sums were done and by the end he didn't even need Norman's help.

"But how can I make friends with the other kids at school?" sighed Roger.

"It's easy," said Norman, "just do like I did with you. Choose someone who looks friendly and just start talking to them. You'll find that's all there is to it."

"Hey, can I have one of those chocolates?" Norman asked, pointing to the box of chocolates by Roger's bed.

"Of course." said Roger, turning round to get the box to offer to Norman.

When he turned back again he was shocked to find Norman had disappeared. Then...

Roger woke up. It was the middle of the night and he'd been dreaming. But it all seemed so real. Roger felt more cheerful even though Norman had only been a dream.

Roger put his bedside lamp on and decided to get out of bed and check inside his jacket pocket. To his surprise there was a hole in the lining and when he poked his finger through he found Nanny's medal. He took it out and put it on his desk just as he had dreamed.

Roger got back into bed and tried to remember how Norman had helped him with his sums. He opened his schoolbook and found he could do all the sums easily. He soon settled back into a deep sleep and when Mom woke him next morning he was looking forward to another day at his new school.

When Roger got to school he noticed a boy who looked a bit like himself.

"Hello," said Roger, "my name's Roger. What's your name?"

"Norman." the boy replied. "You're new here, aren't you?"

"Yes," said Roger, "I only started yesterday."

"Do you like soccer?" asked Norman.

"Yes." said Roger.

"Some of the boys are going to play soccer at break time.
Would you like to join us?"

"Yes, Norman, I would!" said Roger, happy to have made some
new friends.

The Bear, The Dog and The Rabbit

Once upon a time there was a Bear, a Dog and a Rabbit. They were best friends and always did everything together. They went to school together, played soccer together, went camping together, went to each other's houses for dinner and sleepovers. They were inseparable.

One day they were playing in the park when Rabbit said "shall we go fishing in the big green lake this weekend?"

"Yippee!" said Bear excitedly.

But Dog shook his head. "Sorry guys," he explained, "this weekend I'm going on a rocket to the moon. It's something I've always wanted to do and I've been saving my pennies in a big jar in my bedroom. Finally I have enough so I'm going to realize my dream."

"Dog. Please don't go." pleaded Bear. "Rockets are still very dangerous. They sometimes break down in space."

"Yes", said Rabbit, "and I've heard the moon isn't very interesting anyway. Just a load of dusty old rock. It'll be much more fun fishing with us."

But Dog wouldn't be dissuaded.

Weekend came and Rabbit and Bear set off for their fishing trip, and Dog made his way excitedly to the rocketport.

Dog had to have a medical and then he had to listen to an hour's safety lecture. As the safety officer explained about the

emergency procedures Dog's excitement began to give way to nerves. When he finally stepped out of the lift and into the rocket he was terrified. He wanted to turn round and run back to his home. But what would Bear and Rabbit say.

He closed his eyes and tried to tell himself that the rocket was his dream.

He said a little prayer as the rocket took off. He was pushed back in his seat by the power of the engines. After a little while the rocket seemed to be just floating in space, although it was really traveling very fast indeed.

When the lady brought round dinner Dog refused. He was still absolutely terrified.

After a couple of hours the rocket's engines stopped.

"We apologize for the delay due to a slight technical problem." said the driver.

Dog remembered Bear's warning, and he remembered reading about the rocket that broke down and was left forever to drift through space.

But a few minutes later the engines restarted and they were on their way again.

The rest of the journey passed without problem and the driver landed the rocket right next to the entrance to the Hotel Moon.

Dog was shown to his room. Most of the guests went to the restaurant or bar, or up to the observation room at the top of

the hotel. But Dog just sat in his room and cried, feeling very homesick and very alone.

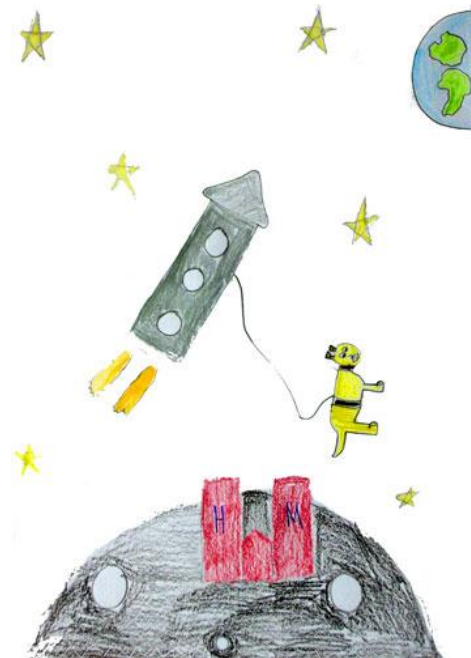
That night Dog couldn't sleep at all. He was worried about the rocket breaking down on the way home.

At around 3am he got out of bed to get a glass of water. He looked out of the window and saw the most beautiful, incredible, amazing sight. It was planet earth glowing like a big blue ball in the dark sky. Dog thought of his friends, smaller than little dots on the surface of that wonderful ball. And he realized how wonderful his planet, and the entire universe really were.

He got dressed and took the lift to the hotel observation room. Already there was an old owl. "Amazing, isn't it." he said.

"It sure is." replied Dog, realizing that his dream had been a good one all along.

Next day Dog got up bright and early, ate a huge breakfast, borrowed a space suit and went for a long walk exploring the mountains and craters of the moon. He thought how long this had been here without anyone touching, or even seeing it. And he felt very small as he looked at the vastness of space around him, but he felt very important and privileged too to be a part of all this.



He went back to the hotel in time for lunch and joined the owl on a bus tour in the afternoon.

They returned in time for a truly delicious dinner of moon-fish and chips.

Dog felt sad when the rocket driver announced it would soon be time to leave. It had taken him a long time to save up for this trip and maybe he could never come back. But he felt happy that he had been here and seen everything he'd seen.

The journey back was a smooth one and when they got to the rocketport he was delighted to find Bear and Rabbit waiting to greet him. "We're so pleased you got back safely." they said.

"No problem." said Dog, "It was fantastic."

After that the Bear, the Dog and the Rabbit remained friends, but not as close as before. Bear still works in a grocery store, Rabbit still drives a bus. But Dog quit his job at the Post Office to become a writer and artist. Now he works from a studio in New York and travels the world telling people how they can improve their lives.

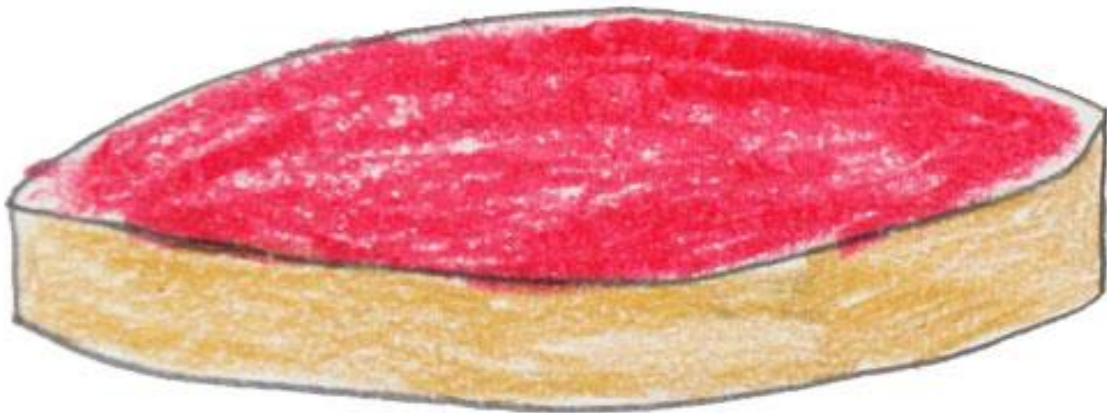
And sometimes he still goes fishing with his old friends.

Roger's Visit

Roger loved visiting Nanny and Grandad in the countryside. Whenever he went Nanny always made a delicious cherry pie for him.

One morning Roger decided to phone Nanny. "Nanny, can I come and visit you today?" he asked

"Of course." replied Nanny. "I'll make a cherry pie for you".



To get to Nanny's Roger had to go down the road, across the field, down the lane, over the bridge and through the woods.

He set off on his journey and made his way down the road, across the field and down the lane. When he got to the end of the lane he was surprised to hear a voice calling his name. It was Grandad.

They said hello and Grandad asked where Roger was going.

"I'm going to visit you and Nanny." said Roger.

Grandad explained that the bridge was closed that day for repairs and that Roger should take the long way round, through the woods.

"I don't know the long way." said Roger.

"Don't worry", said Grandad, "I'm going home. You can come with me."

Together they followed long winding roads. They turned left and right, and right and left. All the time they chatted about Roger's school, his friends, his interests and his hopes.

And Grandad told Roger how dangerous the woods could be with all the ghosts, and monsters, and ticklers. Grandad loved to joke, so Roger wasn't sure if he should believe him.

Eventually they arrived at the far side of the woods. They could see Nanny and Grandad's house in the distance.

"You go on, Roger." said Grandad, "I have to buy some beer in the beer shop. I'll see you soon."

Roger carried on to Nanny's house and knocked on the door. He could smell the cherry pie baking as she opened it.

"Roger! Oh I'm so pleased to see you" said Nanny. "I was just watching TV. The bridge collapsed this morning and lots of people fell into the sea. I was so worried about you."

"It's OK." said Roger. "I met Grandad on the way. He told me the bridge was closed for repairs and we took the long way round together."

"Don't be silly." said Nanny. "Grandad's away on business in Europe. You couldn't have met him."

"I did meet him." insisted Roger. "He'll be back in a minute. He's just gone to buy beer in the beer shop."

Nanny looked confused. "Roger, that beer shop closed two years ago. Grandad has to take the car into town to buy beer now."

She took Roger into the house, lifted the phone and dialed Grandad's hotel number in Europe. Grandad answered and spoke to Roger.

Roger shuddered. Who had told him about the bridge and guided him through the woods?

The Bee and the Flowers

Once upon a time there was a bee called Bobby. He lived in a hive in a tree and every day went out to gather nectar from the flowers around his home. Bobby loved yellow flowers. All summer long he buzzed from one flower to another, collecting nectar and taking it back to the hive where the other bees would use it to make honey.

"Bobby, I'm really proud of you," said the Queen bee one day, "you bring us more nectar than any of the other bees."

"Thanks," said Bobby, "but it's my pleasure. I love my job."

And so he did. There was nothing Bobby loved more than the scent of beautiful yellow flowers.

But one day autumn came. The leaves turned gold and red and brown and began to fall from the trees. The days grew cooler and shorter. And when Bobby went to his favorite field the yellow flowers were gone. He flew to the other fields where he'd had so much fun, only to find all the yellow flowers gone.

He flew around the park, and the people's gardens. There were pink flowers and red ones, orange ones and white ones, but no yellow ones. Bobby settled on the ground sad and exhausted, and started to cry.

After a while a wise old wasp landed next to him.

"What's wrong?" asked the wasp.

Bobby told him about the yellow flowers all being gone.

"HMMMMMM," the wasp thought for a while, then he offered some advice.

"There are two things you can do. Firstly, if you really must have yellow flowers, there are some on the other side of the mountain. I went there once when I was a boy. But be warned, it's a long and difficult flight. It'll take two days at least to get to the other side."

Bobby listened carefully. He felt relieved that he could still find yellow flowers, but a little scared because he'd never stayed away from his hive overnight before.

"Or," continued the wasp, "you could try one of the other color flowers, pink ones or red or orange or white. If you don't like them, there's nothing lost, but perhaps you'll find them nearly as nice as yellow. It's your choice."

Bobby thought for a while then said, "perhaps I'll try red."

"Follow me," said the wasp, "I know some very good red flowers not far from here."

Together they flew to the red flowers. Bobby was nervous at first, but soon he found the red flowers just as good as the yellow. In fact they were even better, because they were different.



Roger's Dream

One Friday Roger came home from school feeling happy because it was the start of the weekend. He ate his dinner, watched TV, played with Dad, had his bath and went to bed.

Mom read him a story, kissed him goodnight, turned off the light and closed the door.

Roger soon fell asleep and slept and slept and slept....

Then he had a funny dream. He was shopping in the town with Mom. He had his blue coat on and Mom had her yellow jacket. They were walking along the High Street when they heard a noise. "Woof! Woof!" They looked across the street and saw a big brown dog chasing a ginger cat. The cat jumped over the wall and the big dog followed it. They heard "Grrrr!" coming from the other side.

Then Roger noticed a number 94 bus coming along the road. The driver had a big white beard and looked a bit like Father Christmas. He waved to Roger and Roger waved back.

They carried on and met Mrs Briggs from across the street walking the other way.

"Hello Roger." said Mrs Briggs.

"Hello Mrs Briggs." replied Roger.

Then they saw a man up a ladder painting the wall of a house blue. Just as they were about to walk under his ladder the

man dropped his pot of paint. It hit Mom on the head. The paint splashed all over Mom's coat and all over Roger too.

"Ouch!" screamed Mom and she cried and cried.

Roger woke up. He was sweating and his heart was banging.

He got up, went to the bathroom, and drank a glass of water.

Eventually he went back to sleep.

Next morning Mom woke him up at 9 o'clock.

"Hi Roger." she said, "Today's Saturday. You don't have to go to school. Dad had a telephone call this morning to say he has to work, so after breakfast I'm going to take you into town to do some shopping, and when we finish we can have an ice cream together."

Roger got up and ate breakfast. Then he and Mom got ready to go shopping.

He took his favorite red jacket from the coat stand. But Mom said, "You'd better wear your blue coat, it's starting to get colder now."

Roger put on his blue coat and Mom wore her yellow jacket and off they went.

As they were walking along the High Street they heard a noise. "Woof! Woof!" Across the street a big brown dog was chasing a ginger cat. The terrified cat jumped over the wall and the big dog followed it. They heard "Grrrr!" coming from the other side.

Then Roger saw a number 94 bus coming along the road. The driver had a big white beard and looked a little like Father Christmas. He waved to Roger and Roger waved back.

"That's strange." thought Roger as he began to remember his dream.

They carried on Roger wasn't so surprised when they met Mrs Briggs walking the other way.

"Hello Roger." said Mrs Briggs.

"Hello" replied Roger.

Then they saw a man up a ladder painting the wall of a house. Just as they were about to walk under the ladder Roger pulled at Mom and screamed "Mom! Stop!"

"Roger. Don't be silly!" said Mom.

Just then the man dropped his pot of paint. The blue paint splattered all over the pavement, but luckily it missed Roger and Mom.

Mom picked Roger up.

"Roger. You clever boy", she said, "You saved me. I'm going to buy you an extra big ice cream. But how did you know the man would drop his paint?"

I dreamt it, said Roger.



The Apple Seller

Once upon a time in a quiet little village lived an old man and an old lady.

They were very poor but just about managed to grow enough food to eat in their tiny garden.

Late one afternoon as the old man was planting potatoes he heard the faint sound of a bell ringing in the distance.

This was very unusual as visitors hardly ever came to the village. He rushed inside to tell his wife.

Together they went to the front door to listen. The sound of the bell was growing louder, and they could now make out the sound of a voice.

"Apples, apples, buy my lovely apples".

After a while they could see a lone figure pushing a barrow approaching from the distance.

As the figure reached the road running past their cottage they could see the barrow was laden with the most delicious looking apples. They didn't have much money but the apples looked so good they simply had to buy one.

The old man and lady stopped the apple seller to inspect his wares. The apple seller was dressed in ragged clothes. He had long hair and a straggly beard. But as they looked at his face the old man and lady noticed he had the kindest looking eyes they'd ever seen.

Before they could ask how much the apples were the apple seller spoke.

"I've been pushing my barrow since early morning. Do you think I could possibly have a glass of water?" he asked.

"Of course," said the old lady, inviting him into her home.

He sat on the sofa and sipped the water.

When it was time to leave he thanked the old man and lady for their kindness, and instead of selling them an apple he opened a drawer underneath the barrow and took out the shiniest, reddest apple they had ever seen.

"Share this apple," he told them, "and whatever you dream tonight will come true."

The old man and lady thanked the apple seller for the apple and said farewell as he continued on his way.

They cut the apple in half and ate it. They laughed at the words of the apple seller, but both agreed it was the best apple they'd ever tasted.

The old man saved the pips to plant the next day. If he could grow apples that good to sell at market they wouldn't be so poor.

Next morning the old man and lady asked each other what they had dreamed. They were astonished to find they'd both had the same dream, that they'd been together on a beautiful

tropical island. They remembered the apple seller's words and smiled again. It was only a dream.

The old man took the apple pips into the garden to plant. The only spare space was over in the far corner. That area had never been planted before because the soil was too rocky. But this time the old man had no choice but to dig it.

He'd been digging less than a minute when his shovel hit something. It wasn't a rock but a piece of metal. The old man dug more. It was a metal box.

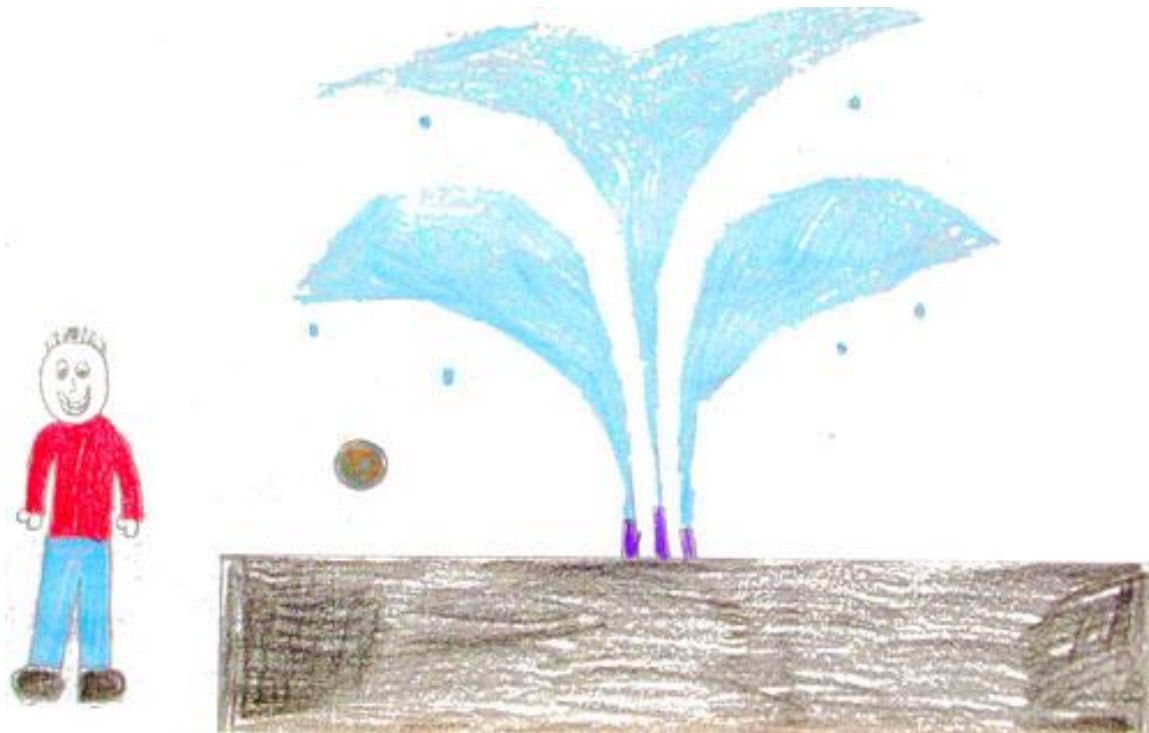


He dug it out of the ground and took it into the house. Opening it he discovered it was full of gold coins.

The old man and lady sold the gold coins for a lot of money and were able to move to the beautiful tropical island of their dreams where they've lived happily ever after.

Roger and the Picture

One day Roger was walking to school through the park. As he passed the fountain he remembered when he was a little boy Mom always told him to throw a coin into the fountain, close his eyes and make a wish.



As he was passing a garbage can he noticed something unusual inside. He went over to take a closer look and found it was a picture in a wooden frame. The picture showed a man wearing a long dark coat playing a flute. Sitting on the grass listening to the man were some children. They appeared to be on top of a hill.

Roger felt there was something special about the picture so he took it out of the rubbish bin and put it in his school bag.

Roger looked at the picture several times during the day. Each time it seemed a little different, as though the people had moved.

After school Roger went home. He took the picture out of his bag and put it on the bed. Then he started thinking about the history homework his teacher had given him.

Suddenly Roger heard the sound of a flute playing in the distance. It was very strange because his door and windows were closed. The sound gradually grew louder. Then Roger noticed the picture. The people were moving. The man was playing the flute and the children were gently swaying as they listened.

Then Roger felt himself being sucked inside the picture. He found himself standing on the hillside watching the man and children. The man stopped playing his flute and told the children it was time to go. The man and the children didn't seem to notice Roger.

The children followed the man and Roger followed the children. They made their way across the hilltop to a little wooden cottage.

Inside the house the man gave the children different jobs to do.

"Anne and Barry, cook my dinner. Chris and Diane, dig the garden. Edward and Gerry, wash my clothes..." he ordered. And so he continued until all the children had been given tasks.

Then the man lay on the sofa and closed his eyes.

Roger wondered why the children worked so hard for the man. He went into the garden and tried to speak to Chris and Diane. But they did not see or hear him. And when he tapped them on the shoulder they could not feel him.

So he went into the kitchen. Anne couldn't see or hear or feel him either. But when he spoke to Barry the little boy was terrified.

"Don't be scared," said Roger, "I'm not a ghost. I was looking at a picture and I just found myself here."

"Did you hear Freddie's flute too?" asked Barry.

"Yes. Is that how you got here?" replied Roger.

Barry explained that all the children had heard Freddie playing the flute and had been drawn into Freddie's world.

"Freddie's alright really", said Barry, "he gives us food and somewhere to sleep. But we all miss our Mommies and Daddies."

"Can't you leave here?" asked Roger.

"No", said Barry. "If we try to leave Freddie just plays his flute and we have to come back again."

"Why can't anyone else see me?" asked Roger.

"I don't know," said Barry, "you look kind of transparent. I thought you were a ghost at first. That's why I was scared."

Roger decided that he would talk to Freddie and ask him to let the children go home.

Freddie was still asleep on the sofa. Roger spoke, but Freddie didn't hear. Roger tapped Freddie on the leg, but still he didn't wake. Then Roger took the flute from Freddie's pocket. He started to play.

Freddie woke. "Who are you?" he asked in a frightened voice.

Roger stopped playing and told Freddie his name. He asked why Freddie kept all the children with him in the house.

"My Mom and Dad left me when I was a little boy. I had no friends or family," he told Roger sadly. "I was all alone. Then I found this flute under a tree. I'd never played before but I found I could play beautiful music. And I found that whenever I played near children they had to follow me. The children are my friends and family. I look after them and they look after me. They're happy here. Every day we play together on the hilltop, and every day I play my beautiful music for them."

"Haven't you ever thought they miss their Mommies and Daddies, just as you miss yours?" asked Roger.

"Maybe", said Freddie, "but I can't let them go. I can't be all alone again."

"Haven't you ever tried to find a wife?" asked Roger.

Freddie said he hadn't and he was too shy even to speak to girls.

Roger remembered the fountain in the park. "Why don't you just close your eyes and wish for a wife?" he suggested.

"No, don't be silly," said Freddie, "wishes don't come true."

Roger went back to the kitchen and told Barry to gather all the children together in the garden.

"Who can see and hear me?" asked Roger.

Slowly all of the children raised their hands.

Freddie stood by the door watching.

"Right," said Roger, "if you want to go home, all you have to do is close your eyes and wish for it. Go on, just try."

The children all closed their eyes. Freddie laughed.

But one by one the children started to disappear as they found themselves back with their Mommies and Daddies.

Freddie stopped laughing and started playing his flute. Louder and louder, and faster and faster he played. But still the children disappeared until only he and Roger were left.

Freddie had tears in his eyes. "Now you'll have to stay with me forever," he told Roger.

"No," said Roger, "I have my own family. But why don't you try wishing for a wife?"

Freddie closed his eyes and wished. All of a sudden the figure of a beautiful young lady appeared in the distance walking towards them.

"There you are," said Roger, "and now it's time for me to go."

Roger closed his eyes and wished himself back to his room. His mother was calling him downstairs for tea.

Roger took another look at the picture. It still showed a man wearing a long dark coat playing a flute. But now there were no children. Instead a young lady in a long green dress was lying on the grass listening to him. And they were smiling at each other.

Melissa

One day Lucy went on a train with Mom and Dad to visit Aunty Kitty in Culverton.

They had a great day walking in the woods and eating sandwiches and cake in Aunty Kitty's garden.

When it was time to go home they waved goodbye to Aunty Kitty and made their way to Culverton station. It wasn't long before the train pulled in.

Before they got in the train they waited for a man and lady to get off. Lucy noticed the lady was carrying a sleeping little girl about the same age as herself.

They found a nice seat and as Dad was arranging their bags Lucy noticed a dolly on the floor. The dolly had a sad face, but as Lucy bent down to pick it up it seemed to smile at her. Lucy fell in love with the dolly.

"Can I keep her, Mom? Please." asked Lucy.

Mom smiled and said, "yes."

"What are you going to call her?" asked Dad.

Just then Lucy heard a little voice say, "My name's Melissa."

"I'll call her Melissa," said Lucy.

Lucy held Melissa all the way back to their house, and even took her to bed with her that night.

"Goodnight," said Lucy. She heard a small voice whisper "Goodnight." back.

Next day before Lucy went to school she sat Melissa in her special rocking chair.

When Lucy got home Melissa was gone from the chair. Instead she was on the floor along with some of Lucy's toys. Again Melissa seemed to smile at Lucy.

Lucy asked Mom if she'd moved Melissa, but Mom said she hadn't.

She didn't say anything to Mom, but so it went on. Sometimes Lucy would speak to Melissa and hear her answer back. Sometimes Melissa would be in a different place than where Lucy left her. And sometimes Lucy's things would be moved.

One night Lucy had a strange dream. Melissa had become a real girl and she and Lucy were playing in a park. All of a sudden another girl called out to Melissa. Melissa asked Lucy to go and play with the other girl. The dream was so clear that next morning Lucy had to check to make sure Melissa was still a dolly.

Lucy started dreaming about Melissa every night. Sometimes they were playing in the park where Melissa met the other girl. Sometimes they were in a house having a tea party. And sometimes they were running along the beach. But always in the dreams Melissa met the other girl who seemed familiar to Lucy but she couldn't remember where she'd seen her before.

Then Lucy had another dream about Melissa. This time they were at a fair. They went on different rides, watched a motorcycle display, and ate hot dogs and candy floss. Lucy especially remembered the delicious smell of the fried onions. And then they made their way to a little striped tent over in far corner of the fairground.

Lucy kept having the same dream night after night, but each night the dream continued a little longer. First she could read the sign outside the striped tent, it said, "Dolly tent." Then she went inside. There were lots of dollies hanging up. People were trying to throw ping pong balls into goldfish bowls. If you threw a ball in the bowl, you could choose a dolly. Finally Melissa met her new friend. Lucy noticed one of the dollies in the tent looked just like Melissa.

One day when Lucy got home from school Mom told her Aunty Kitty had phoned.

"It's Culverton Fair on Saturday," said Mom. "Aunty Kitty asked if you wanted to go, but I told her it was your best friend's birthday party. I didn't think you'd want to miss that."

Lucy and Margaret had been friends since kindergarten, but somehow Lucy remembered the dreams she'd been having, and she thought her new friend Melissa might like to go to the fair.

Lucy told Mom she wanted to go to the fair instead of Margaret's party. Mom was surprised but she called Aunty Kitty back and told her they would be coming on Saturday after all.

After that, Lucy stopped dreaming about Melissa, and Melissa stopped talking to Lucy and moving about on her own.

Saturday quickly came and Mom, Dad, Lucy and Melissa got on the train for Culverton. Aunty Kitty was waiting to meet them at the station and they drove to the fairground.

They had a wonderful day. Lucy and Melissa went on some different rides, and then Aunty Kitty told them there would be a police motorcycle display. It was fantastic.

After the motorcycle display they stopped by the hot dog stand for lunch. The fried onions smelled delicious. When they finished their hot dogs Aunty Kitty bought everyone some candy floss.

Just as they were about to go home, Lucy noticed a striped tent in the only corner of the fairground they hadn't visited.

"Let's go over there," she said, and set off for the tent without waiting for an answer.

Mom, Dad and Aunty Kitty followed.

Just as she'd seen in her dream there was sign saying, "Dolly tent".



Lucy and Melissa went inside. There were lots of dollies hanging up, and in the middle of the room lots of goldfish bowls. A little girl was trying to throw ping pong balls into the bowls, but she lost. The girl seemed strangely familiar.

"Come on, Mary," said her Mommy, "I'll buy you a dolly in the toy shop".

Mary started crying. "Just one more try, Mommy", she pleaded.

Mommy agreed.

As Mary was getting ready to throw her first ball, Lucy looked up and noticed a dolly that looked exactly the same as Melissa.

Mary missed with her first two balls, then her final ball landed right in a goldfish bowl.

She jumped for joy, and immediately chose the dolly that looked like Melissa.

Then she turned round and looked at Lucy and noticed Melissa. Mary's smile turned to sadness and she started to cry again.

"Mommy, that's Melissa." said Mary.

Lucy suddenly recognized Mary as the girl from her dreams.

She went over to Mary and asked, "Who's Melissa?"

Mary explained that she won a dolly like Melissa at Culverton fair last year. She was a very special dolly, but one day they'd

left her on the train by mistake when they'd been to visit her uncle Bob.

Then Lucy remembered how she found Melissa, and she remembered the girl who was asleep as she left the train. It was Mary.

"This *is* Melissa," said Lucy, handing her to the little girl.

Lucy explained how she found Melissa on the train.

"Thank you," said Mary and her mother as Mary gave Lucy the dolly she'd just won.

Roger and the Room with the Black Door

One day Mom told Roger that she and Dad needed to go away for a few days on business and they'd asked Aunty Betty to look after him while they were away.

Roger hadn't seen Aunty Betty since he was a baby but he was very excited because she lived in the countryside.

Next day Roger packed a suitcase and his mother drove him to the station. He got on the train to Wibley and Mom told him to be good and have a nice time with Aunty Betty. She waved as the train pulled out of the station.

The train seemed to take forever making its way through the countryside. It stopped at lots of little country stations until Roger was the only one left in his compartment. Eventually the guard announced they had arrived at Wibley.

Roger took his bag and got off the train. An old lady with a jolly round face and a mass of curly white hair was waiting at the station door. It was Aunty Betty. "Haven't you got big," she said to Roger, "you were a little baby last time I saw you."

They got into Aunty Betty's old-fashioned car and they drove down one narrow winding country lane after another until they stopped at a pretty pink house in the middle of a wood. "Welcome to Rainbow Cottage," said Aunty Betty, opening the door for Roger.

Aunty Betty gave Roger a drink and a snack and showed him around the house. Every room had a different color door and

was decorated in that color inside. Aunty Betty's room had a red door and Roger's room had a green door.

At the top of some more stairs was a room with a black door. Aunty Betty made Roger promise never to go in that room. When he asked why, Aunty Betty told him it was a very old storage room full of cobwebs and spiders and she didn't want them getting out into the rest of the house.



Aunty Betty didn't have a television so after supper of the most delicious eggs and bacon she told Roger some old country stories. Roger was almost falling asleep when Aunty Betty suggested they went to bed.

After his long and exciting day Roger quickly fell into a deep sleep. But he was awoken by the sound of footsteps going upstairs followed by the creaking of an opening door. Roger then heard what sounded like a low groaning sound. He was a little scared but quickly drifted back to sleep and had a strange dream he was being chased through the woods by a black shape.

He awoke next morning and went downstairs to find Aunt Betty had made a delicious breakfast of sausages and pancakes with fried tomatoes and homemade bread. He quickly forgot last night's dream.

Aunt Betty told him she was taking him into the village to get some shopping. They went in the grocer's, the butcher's and the greengrocer's. Everyone was very nice and they all treated Aunt Betty as an old friend. Aunt Betty told Roger she had lived in the same house all her life.

When they had finished shopping Aunt Betty took Roger to see the village church. She explained that she arranged the flowers for the service every Sunday morning. It was a wonderful old building full of incredibly beautiful statues.

Father Ruby was inside putting up some posters. Aunt Betty and Father Ruby greeted each other and the smiling priest welcomed Roger to the church. He pointed out some of the beautiful stained glass windows and woodcarvings and invited Roger to attend Sunday school followed by juice and cakes on the church lawn. Then Father Ruby said something strange to Aunt Betty.

"We think we might have a problem with a monster in the village. Mr Whitehead has lost some carrots from his garden, Mr Lighthouse lost some turnips, and Mr Redface lost his spinach."

Aunty Betty was a little annoyed at what the priest said. "Surely you can't believe such superstitious nonsense," she replied. "Everyone knows there's no such thing as monsters."

"Well," continued Father Ruby, "Dr Williams told me only yesterday he's been seeing lots of children complaining of bad nightmares. Monsters are supposed to cause children to have nightmares."

"Please," advised the priest, "for safety's sake, keep your doors and windows locked after dark".

Aunty Betty still didn't seem to believe him, but she agreed that she would lock her doors and windows at night. Aunty Betty told Father Ruby she'd be at the church by seven on Sunday to arrange the flowers.

Aunty Betty drove Roger home. They had ham sandwiches for lunch and spent the afternoon walking in the woods. Aunty Betty pointed out all the different animals, plants and birds to Roger. He thought she was very clever.

That night Roger awoke again in the middle of the night. He heard the sound of a window opening followed by what seemed to be the flapping of giant wings. Afraid but curious Roger climbed out of bed and walked over to the window. He was shocked to see the outline of a great big ugly monster flying away from the house.

Roger leapt back into bed and put his head under the sheets. He tried to sleep but couldn't. Eventually the light of the new day entered his room. He got up at 6:30 and went downstairs.

Aunty Betty was already up. "Roger," she said, "you look so pale. What's wrong?"

Roger told her about what he had seen and heard.

"I'll have words with that silly old priest for putting such nonsense in your head and giving you nightmares," said Aunty Betty.

Roger didn't eat anything for breakfast. Aunty Betty was worried and drove him to Wibley to see Dr Williams.

Roger told Dr Williams all about the past two nights. Dr Williams listened carefully.

He advised Roger to have a quiet day indoors and gave Aunty Betty some tablets for him to take before bedtime.

"These will give you a good night's sleep and tomorrow you'll be right as rain," Dr Williams reassured him.

Roger spent the day drawing and looking through Aunty Betty's old books and photo albums. He managed to eat a little supper and Aunty Betty gave him two of the tablets prescribed by Dr Williams.

"Tomorrow's Sunday," she reminded him, "so I have to go to the church early to arrange the flowers. I won't wake you, as you need a good night's sleep. If Dr Williams is right you'll feel

much better tomorrow and I'll take you to Sunday school. It will be a good chance to meet some of the village children."

Roger said goodnight to Aunty Betty and quickly fell into a long deep sleep.

He awoke next morning to the sound of a knocking at the door. Looking at the clock he saw it was eight o'clock. Aunty Betty was already at the church. Roger climbed out of bed and went downstairs to open the door. He was surprised to find it was Dr Williams.

Roger explained that Aunty Betty was out.

"I know," said Dr Williams, "that's why I called."

The doctor explained that he wanted to take a look in Aunty Betty's upstairs storage room.

"But I promised I wouldn't go in there", said Roger.

"Don't worry," said Dr Williams, "I'll take the responsibility. And if I'm wrong Aunty Betty will never even know."

Together they climbed the stairs to the black door. Slowly Dr Williams opened the door. Inside they saw a great big ugly monster sleeping on the floor. Suddenly it lifted its horrible head and turned towards them and growled. Dr Williams quickly shut the door and they went back downstairs.

I thought there was a monster in the village after so many vegetables started going missing from people's gardens and lots of children came to me with bad nightmares. After you told me about your dreams I thought Aunty Betty might be

involved and when I arrived I noticed how empty her garden is this year. She normally wins prizes for her vegetables.

Together they waited until Aunty Betty returned from church. She was surprised to find Dr Williams waiting with Roger. They told her what they had found in the upstairs room.

Aunty Betty started crying. She admitted that she was keeping a monster in her house. She told them she found it one day when she was walking in the woods. It had been flying in Monsterland when there had been a bad storm. It lost its way and crash landed in Wibley woods and hurt its leg. Aunty Betty had taken it home to look after until its leg got better.

While the monster was getting better it had become Aunty Betty's friend. She told it country stories and it told her all about Monsterland.

She knew it was wrong to keep it and that it soon had to go back to Monsterland but she didn't want to feel alone again.

Dr Williams told her the monster had to go back today.

They all went upstairs to the room with the black door. Aunty Betty went in while the others waited outside. After a while the door opened.

"I've told him he has to go back," said Aunty Betty.

They all went into the room and Aunty Betty opened the window. The monster climbed out and started to fly away as they all waved goodbye. Just before he flew out of view the monster turned and nodded his great ugly head.